

## **REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Applicants have canceled claims 1-22 herein and have submitted new claims 23-44, all of which are believed to be statutory.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claims the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Applicants have canceled claim 7 herein, as well as all claims 1-22, and have new claims 23-44 all of which are believed to particularly point out and distinctly claims the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention

Claims 1-3, 7, 9-13, 16-19 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Villaret et al., U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0026367 [“Villaret”].

Claims 4, 8 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Villaret.

Claims 5, 6, 14, 15 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Villaret, in view of Chui et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,657,702 [“Chui”].

All of the previously submitted claims have been rejected as being anticipated by Villaret or rendered obvious by Villaret alone or in combination. Applicants believe that newly submitted claims 23-44 all distinguish over Villaret at least for the following reasons. The examiner cited Villaret as disclosing the previously claimed step “providing a digital storage device at one of said order terminals”, wherein Villaret showed storing vendor applications at the terminal. Each of the presently submitted independent claims, 23, 34, and 44, clarify that a portable storage device is coupled to an order terminal by a user. Hence, Villaret does not disclose or render obvious this claimed element. All of the newly submitted dependent claims include this limitation by dependency and are also allowable.

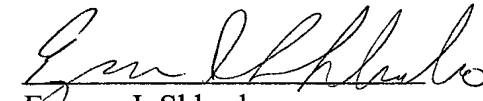
The examiner cited Villaret as disclosing “providing an offering . . . based on a business relationship . . .” Each of the presently submitted independent claims, 23, 34, and 44, clarify that a database stores rankings of business relationships and that the offerings (“purchasing” or “pricing” information in the present claims) are based

on relationship rankings rather than on a relationship alone. Hence, Villaret does not disclose or render obvious this claimed element. All of the newly submitted dependent claims include this limitation by dependency and are also allowable.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit the prior art references do not teach or suggest the invention as currently set forth.

In view of the foregoing it is respectfully submitted that the claims in their present form are in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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